

## **CP 6112: INTRODUCTION TO LAND USE PLANNING**

M/W 5:00 – 6:30pm

Classroom: Skiles Building, Rm. 308, 686 Cherry St. N.W. Atlanta, GA 30332

Instructor: Jeff Rader, FAICP

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Welcome to CP6112, Introduction to Land Use Planning. This Syllabus is subject to change, with future details on Class Assignments reflected in the weekly calendar and assignments tab. Please refer back to these pages for updates.

I am a practitioner, retired from elected office, with prior experience in policy and advocacy organizations, state and local government, and in the private sector. You may review my resume and Teaching Philosophy under Files in Canvas.

### **TEXT**

David Rouse and Rocky Piro. 2022. *The Comprehensive Plan: Sustainable, Resilient and Equitable Communities for the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge - paperback ISBN 9780367897550

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Comprehensive-Plan-Sustainable-Resilient-and-Equitable-Communities-for-the-21st-Century/Rouse-Piro/p/book/9780367897550>

[Links to an external site.](#)

I highly recommend your purchase of the eBook, to take advantage of links and other features of the electronic version. Please bring your text to class on a device, so that I can refer you to figures or other content during the lecture, and to facilitate your note taking.

## OVERVIEW

The focus of this course is the development of the local Comprehensive Land Use Plan using standards developed by the American Planning Association. The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation of Land Use Planning and the analysis and policies derived from it are manifest in the land use developed within the community. The Text is not the only template available for the construction of a Comp Plan. In fact, many states mandate a specific format and content for local comprehensive planning, imposing uniform minimum standards to facilitate regional continuity and meet the expectations of policy makers, and other planning techniques and strategies can tease out issues and approaches appropriate to any number of situations. Moreover, the level of detail and complexity of plans will vary with the communities for which they are developed.

That said, the APA Standards taught in this Text constitute a strong framework for understanding the challenges facing communities and their professional staff and consultants in integrating local, regional and even global imperatives for an increasingly diverse array of stakeholders and constituents.

I will also be sharing my perspective as a Planning Practitioner who has been fortunate to have made my career in a dynamic region that has one of the longest formal planning histories in the nation. I will therefore be sharing real world experience on how plans come together and shape the communities for which they are prepared (or not).

In addition to the Text, we will be reading plans that are exemplars of the principles emphasized in it, and evaluate these examples using the standards presented there. Over ten weeks, we will explore the Text Chapter(s) on Wednesday, and assign a planning document that illustrates concepts from the chapter, along with a prompt for written response by each student. From your written submissions, I will select and invite a number of students to expound further on their written response. Those who are able to stimulate questions and discussion among your classmates will receive an additional increment of credit. The last segment of the semester will be devoted to an in-depth team evaluation of a comprehensive plan that your team selects and I approve, using the APA Standards enumerated in Appendix A of the Text. Your

team will divide the categories of the Standards among themselves and develop a written critique of your selected plan by applying these standards to it. In addition, each team will be expected to contact and interview personnel involved in the creation and/or administration of your selected plan, using an interview instrument that you have created and submitted to me for review and approval. High performing teams will use this process to gain insight into the process of developing and implementing the plan you study, and in its performance. You will document your interview(s) with video and a group presentation in class at the end of the semester.

## **EVALUATION**

**Attendance 20%** - Attendance is mandatory, both to facilitate your engagement in the Text, as well as to offer you and your classmates the opportunity to participate in the discussion of the materials we focus upon. Absences will be excused only in the event of a pre-approved academic conflict, or severe illness. You may apply for excuse due to extenuating circumstance, but all excused absences will be at the discretion of the instructor.

**Weekly Assignments 50%** - Ten weeks will include reading from the Text and an assignment of a plan or other document for your review and analysis, responding in writing to a written prompt from the instructor. Grading for the each assignment will include credit for reading and responding to the prompt. On a number of occasions, each student will be notified (over the weekend) of their opportunity to present the following Monday on their observations in response to the prompt. You will present your observations, and if your presentation stimulates substantive follow-up questions and discussion, you will receive extra credit, to supplement your written submissions. So, to receive 100% credit for Weekly Assignments, you will need to respond to every prompt, and stimulate class feedback in response to your presentations. The number of opportunities for the extra credit will be determined by the number of students in the class, and will be confirmed to you when enrollment is finalized. Further detail is included under Assignments.

## **Final Project 30% –**

The final project will be attempted by students working on a team, the size and number of which will be determined by enrollment. The challenge of the project will be the evaluation of a local Comprehensive Plan against the APA Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places, which is the focus of our textbook. In addition to the substance of the evaluation, the class will also be expected to organize itself to accomplish the evaluation and to engage those involved in developing and administering the plan to gain insight on process and priorities. An evaluation against the APA Standards will be complemented by class recommendations for improving the plan. The details of the assignment are aggregated below, and the discrete graded elements of the project are repeated in the Assignments page of Canvas.

### **Plan Selection and Organization**

After a presentation on the Atlanta Regional Development Center's (ARC) role in the local planning process, class teams will make an initial review of on-line materials available for each of the jurisdictional plans highlighted in the presentation, convene virtually or in person and select from among them the focus of this team project.

Reviewing PAS 578 and the details of this assignment, the team shall equitably divide responsibility for process support and application of each of the ten standards detailed in the PAS among your team-members to allow each of you to efficiently contribute to the team project.

For instance, some may gravitate towards project management, editing or liaison to the jurisdiction, while others may take more responsibility for analysis and documentation. Report to me your plan selection and division of work in the class project so that I may evaluate each student's contribution to the final project submissions. Please list specifically what responsibilities each student will assume.

You may choose to combine or share roles, but each student's performance will be evaluated against the roles they assume here and their efforts documented in the final report. Provided that clear and valid effort is made to collect needed documentation and engage the

professional staff responsible for the plan, performance will be evaluated based on effort documented in the report.

If the team is unable to agree on an approach and organization, the instructor will assign roles.

**Your submission should include:**

1. The plan selected for evaluation
2. The roles of each team member, which may at your option include:
  - Team Process Lead, focused on workflow and submission timeline, content expectations and format, tracking team work products, organizing the class presentation, etc.
  - Liaison to the plan sponsor and supporting practitioners, serving as outreach point of contact, requester of desired documentation, scheduler or conductor for interviews or follow up, etc.
  - Document manager, focused on assembling team-generated plan analysis, interview documentation and other elements into a final report and presentation.
  - Plan element analysts, focused on analyzing the plan against each specific element of the APA standards and generating documented evaluation and ratings against the standard, along with recommendations for improvement.
  - Other roles as you define

**Assemble Additional Documentation and Develop an Interview Plan**

After choosing a plan and organizing your team, more completely review the subject plan materials available on line to prepare a request for any additional documentation you might want to see, such as a Community Engagement Plan, Inventory and Analysis of existing conditions, projections for future conditions, etc. that may contribute to your review of the plan against the APA Standards detailed in the PAS.

Identify a preliminary point of contact for your jurisdiction (and their consultants, if relevant), and contact them via email to introduce your team and the project. Follow up as necessary to expedite contact.

Explain your work and request access to the additional material you are seeking. Ask them to facilitate your effort and help you to organize interviews with appropriate parties after you have completed your review of documentation. You may also supplement this interaction with phone calls or a site visit as needed.

With materials in hand and a review of the subject plan complete, the team should create a list of interview questions and target interviewees to help responsible team members evaluate the plan in your chosen focus areas against the APA Standards. A report from project team detailing your preliminary interaction with planners and your interview plan will be submitted to me for review, comment and credit.

**Your submission should include:**

1. Documentation of your efforts to obtain the documentation and the outcome of those efforts, including contact list log of interaction with plan contacts.
2. List of additional documentation desired, organized around the ten APA evaluation criteria
3. A plan for interviews of planners associated with the Plan under review, and interview questions seeking clarifications relevant to your evaluation of the Plan based on the APA Standards.

**Final Report**

Use the Subject Plan, the APA Standards (particularly the evaluation methodologies and scoring systems), supplemental documentation you collected and the interviews to complete your assessment of the Plan against the Standards, commenting on areas of excellence, sufficiency, and deficiency, along with recommendations for improvements.

Your evaluation of your subject Plan should be structured around Chapter 3 of PAS 578, with a focus on Steps 2-4. These steps acknowledge that all plans may not include all elements required to meet the expectations of the APA Standards, and as a tool for plan improvement, anticipates the revision of the plan to more nearly meet the APA Standards.

Due to the limitations of our purposes, we will not undertake the revision process prescribed, and will instead lean more heavily on the evaluation of the existing plan as described in Step 2, and measuring plan elements against Best Practices where feasible as suggested in Step 3, rather than completely rethinking the plan.

**Your submission should include:**

1. An introduction providing context to the reader and describing the organization of the document.

2. Adaptations of prior submissions describing the plan (and jurisdiction) you selected, the responsibilities of members of your team, a list of supplemental materials you requested and those you obtained, and your interview strategy, questions and any key insights from these.
3. Explanation of the scope and purpose of the plan reviewed, concluding with enumeration of APA Standards that are not addressed in the subject plan.
4. Evaluation of responsive elements of the subject plan through the application of the Best Practices found in Appendix B citing specific processes, policies or activities that meet or do not meet the expectation of Best Practice.
5. Use the scoring tool in Appendix C to summarize your analysis, also indicating where the subject plan may be unresponsive to the parameter.
6. Conclude the report with recommendations for improvement of the plan as reviewed and expansions of the planning scope as may be suggested by the standards.

### **Final Presentation**

Translate your written report into a class presentation supported with visuals, with each member of the team participating and describing their work and observations informed by the experience over the course of the semester.

### **Your submission should include:**

A presentation deck supporting verbal presentation of the Class Final Report, with each student explaining their contribution and conclusions.

### **COURSE NOTES:**

- Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity and honor. Accordingly, the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code will provide the ethical framework for monitoring and evaluating behavior and producing work for this studio. Please review it at [http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules\\_regulations](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules_regulations) Links to an external site.

- You should keep up with Tech's latest guidance on dealing with Covid-19.
- Contact me at the beginning of the semester if you feel you need course adaptations or accommodations due to disability or special hardship, or if you have any emergency medical information that I should know about. Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations must obtain an accommodations letter from the ADAPTS Office [[adapts.gatech.edu](https://adapts.gatech.edu) [Links to an external site.](#)] to ensure appropriate arrangements.
- If on campus, in case of emergency (i.e. fire, accident, criminal act), please call the Georgia Tech Police at [894-2500](tel:894-2500).

### **MODIFIED OPERATIONS POLICIES:**

With developments and improvements to digital instruction over the past few years, the Institute has developed policies to leverage digital learning as much as reasonably possible. The policy sets forth requirements, procedures, and responsibilities related to the scheduling of digital instruction and/or make-up classes due to the modification of campus operations, closing of campus, or the necessary closing of instructional spaces for any reason (including but not limited to emergencies, such as inclement weather, power outages, or other infrastructure failures). Students should await communications from their instructors regarding delivery of their classes during that period based upon the [Digital Learning Days for Modified Campus Operations Policy](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

. Students should follow guidance and/or directions provided by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-Being regarding student activities, events, programs and services.

### **OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY:**

By appointment before class on Mondays and Wednesdays, or as agreed upon. I expect to be generally available for email communication, and will meet with students and teams upon request. I will do my best to

respond in a timely manner. If I don't respond within 24 hours, ping me again.